



SPEECH

OF

MR. YANCEY, OF ALABAMA

ON THE

OREGON QUESTION.

. DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

JANUARY 7, 1846.

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SPEECH.

On the resolution giving the twelve months' notice for the termination of the joint occupancy of the Oregon territory.

On motion of Mr. YANCEY, the House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, (Mr. TIBBATS, of Ky., in the chair,) and resumed the consideration of the joint resolution reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, providing for the termination of the convention of 1827.

Mr. YANCEY said—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Events of no ordinary magnitude have been rapidly thickening around the path of our progress as a nation. But yesterday, a magnificent empire, fruitful in all the elements of moral, political, and commercial greatness, obtained peaceful ingress within the pale of our liberties, and a full fruition of our laws and institutions. But yesterday, and the representatives of a land, which had long been the El Dorado of Spanish hopes in the palmy days of that once splendid monarchy, took their seats in the councils of the federal Union. Around me I see the representatives of several sovereign States—of States carved from a territory capable of furnishing to the Union as many more—a territory which is drained by the mightiest rivers of the earth, whose sources, in the beautiful and striking phrasology of another upon another occasion, are amidst perpetual snows, but whose outlets are amidst perennial flowers.

This magnificent picture, sir, is but a grouping of the results of peace—of a peace honorably formed, and honorably kept, with the whole world—of a peace which is shedding its radiant influences, and pouring from its "horn of plenty" its choicest blessings upon institutions framed to receive them, and over a people capable, I trust, of appreciating them. It has been a peace which has enabled our commerce to explore every sea in search of their treasures, and our flag to become known to the world as that of a people whose dominions are extended by civilization and by reason, and not by arms and by blood. It has been to us a period of repose, during which our canvass has been unfolding and spreading its snowy sheets over every wave, quietly but effectually driving England from her commercial supremacy on the deep. Under its benign and inspiring influences the energies and intellect of our people have been directed into channels in which they have developed many of the hitherto hidden and mysterious powers of nature, and made them subservient to the great interests of humanity; and, as a part of these results, we can now see the

magnificent ship, with every sail furled, moving with silent and terrible majesty into the very teeth of the wind, as if propelled alone by the unseen and submerged hand of Neptune, and dashing opposing waves in angry spray from her prow—while intelligence is speeding from city to city upon the wings of the lightning!

It has been a peace, which, as if to laugh to scorn the bounties of war, has given to us territory after territory more magnificent in domain, and more pregnant with national grandeur, than any that the blood-dripping eagles of imperial Rome ever flew over in their conquering and devastating career.

Yet, though these are the fruits of such a policy, I see around me crowds of American statesmen, yearning to break this mighty and glorious spell, whose hearts are *panting for war*, whose hands itch to grasp the sword, whose feet are raised to trample the olive branch, whose every impulse is to grapple with England, to decide by the terrible law of arms, a territorial right.

Sir, I respect, though I must disapprove of, the feeling which animates the men of the West on this question. Sympathy for their friends in the far-off Oregon; impatience—indignant impatience, it may be—at any restraint which England may have thrown in the way of a full assertion of our rights there; and a longing, natural to brave hearts, to avenge the oppressions which that haughty power may have committed for centuries upon the nations of the earth, are all feelings which, however much I may deem well calculated to cloud the judgment upon a matter of such grave import, are likewise well calculated to elicit a sympathetic response from every American heart. Strong, too, in all the elements of greatness and strength, we may not fear a contest with any nation.

But we should be careful lest prosperity and continued success should blind us to consequences—lest, in our pride, we fall. Sir, it cannot be treason—it cannot be cowardly—it cannot be unwise, for us calmly and dispassionately to consider our true position in this matter; and I beg of our friends—of the West in particular, (and surely a southron may well claim that sacred relationship to the sons of the West,) that if some of us of the South are disposed to put a curb on this hot impetuosity, we shall not be deemed their enemies on this great issue. Like them, I am for all of Oregon. With them, I believe our title to it to be com-

plete against the world. My only desire is, that we so regulate our movements as to be able to secure it all. To do so is not without great difficulty. On whichever side you turn that difficulty stares you in the face. To overcome it requires moderation—calculation as well as firmness. Haste and impetuous valor may lose us all, or give us but a part.

I desire to give a very brief review of the manner in which we have become connected with England in this matter. Asserting our title as derived from discovery, exploration, and settlement, we were confronted by England, claiming, through a convention entered into between her and Spain, and commonly called the Nootka Sound convention, a right of jointly occupying the country of Oregon, and therefore opposing any exclusive possession in us. Unable to settle the difference satisfactorily and amicably, on the 20th of October, 1818, both parties agreed to a convention, which left the title in abeyance, but gave to the citizens of both countries the right of entering, trading, &c., for the space of ten years.

Shortly afterwards, on the 22d of February 1819, Spain ceded to the United States all her rights to any territory on the Pacific coast, north of latitude forty-two degrees. We thus became possessed of all the rights to the territory of Oregon, save such as Great Britain might deduce from the Nootka Sound convention; under which she only claims a right of joint occupancy, expressly admitting, as I understand her, that she has no exclusive title to one inch of the territory.

Two other attempts at settling this question between us having failed, on the 6th of August, 1827, this joint convention was indefinitely renewed; a provision being inserted, however, that either party might terminate it, by giving to the other twelve months' notice of the intention to do so.

This convention, then, and its renewal, was the result of a failure to reconcile the conflicting claims of the two governments in 1818, 1824, and 1826. In 1818, Mr. Monroe, and in 1826, Mr. Adams offered, as a compromise, to give to Great Britain the free navigation of the Columbia, and exclusive title to all of the territory north of forty-nine degrees of latitude. In 1824, Mr. Monroe also offered to give to Great Britain all above the forty-ninth degree of north latitude. Each of these very favorable, and, it seems to me, conciliatory offers were promptly rejected by the English government. After the first rejection, if negotiation had then closed, what would have been the result? Either we would have had to force England from her joint occupancy, or have ignominiously "abandoned" our rights. To avoid such an issue, what did Mr. Monroe do? He entered into a joint convention for ten years. I put it now to the reason and candor of gentlemen, was not that measure a substitute for war? or, what is far more wretched and withering, if war was not to ensue, was it not a substitute for national disgrace?

After the second prompt rejection of the result of nine years' negotiation by England, our government again consents to an indefinite renewal of the treaty; and why? For the same cause that induced its original formation—to avoid the unpleasant alternative of an appeal to arms; for Great Britain positively, and three times, had refused to yield a joint occupancy of that territory, and of course, a failure to renew the convention would have forced us either to drive her from it, or to abandon it to her! I repeat, then, that this convention was a substitute for war.

It is now proposed to give notice of our desire to terminate this convention, or to substitute results for

these terms, it is now proposed that we annul this substitute for war, and to use the sword to cut this "gordian knot," which twenty-eight years of negotiation have been unable to untie—to do that which Mr. Monroe, under precisely similar circumstances, deemed it unwise to do in 1818; and which Mr. Adams abstained from doing in 1827, under far more favorable circumstances. I said, under far more favorable circumstances; for our States were not then loaded down with those enormous debts which the paper-money system has since bequeathed to them as its dying legacy, and our antagonist was not, as now, armed to the teeth. It will be conceded, I believe, by all, sir, that Great Britain has never—even in the moment when placing her foot upon the prostrate form of that mighty genius of war, Napoleon—been as completely panopied in all the means of defensive and of aggressive war as she is now. At peace with all the world, and having prepared the monarchies of Europe for her movements—amongst whom it is now said we have not a friend to whose arbitration we dare trust this case—she has been husbanding her resources, recruiting on a large scale her naval marine—has built an enormous steam fleet, and sent them round the world, in the peaceful garb of mail-steamer, exploring the coasts and harbors of other nations—whilst, too, she has been constantly augmenting her already immense military resources.

But my colleague [Mr. HILLIARD] who so eloquently addressed the House yesterday upon this question, says that he will not pause to count the armies of England, or to number her ships, or to consider of her resources. Sir, with a feeling of sincere sympathy for that warm and gushing impulse which would fear no danger incurred in the cause of our common country, I must, however, be allowed to express the opinion that, in this instance, it is not "folly to be wise." It is wisdom to obtain a knowledge of, and to reflect upon, the strength of our foe. A Washington has jeopardized not only the lives, but the honor of brave men, in order to find out the strength of the enemy. I cannot but sympathize with this noble ardor, this high-toned American spirit, that is flashing up over the whole nation; but when it would advise us that this is victory, I must reject the advice. I know that it is equal to half the battle; and if the right—if truth and justice decided the swaying ranks of war—freely, heartily, and joyfully would I now commit this issue to that fierce ordeal. But, sir, that is not the case; not justice, but might, rules upon the blood-reeking battle-field; and, knowing this, it becomes the legislator not only to know the means of destruction which the enemy possesses, but to see to it that his own country is not thrown into that arena with nothing but the naked breasts and weaponless hands of her brave sons to maintain their cause. A nation that blindly and passionately plunges into a conflict of arms with an opposing power, deserves no higher meed of praise than should be awarded to the prairie bull, that, shutting his eyes, furiously but blindly rushes upon the object of his hate, the flag-flaunting and armed matador.

The question arises, then, are we prepared for this issue of arms? Alas! sir, "in peace" we have not "prepared for war." From the very West which now seeks to involve the country in its vicissitudes and horrors, has come a long-continued opposition, as I am informed, to any such increase of our gallant and glorious navy as the wants of

the country. Many of our young men are idly permitted to Our army I learn from itary Affairs soldier in match, if a bay.

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the country, it seems to me, imperiously demand. Many of our ships are rotting on the stocks, or lying idly in harbor; and our officers, of course, permitted to roam over the land, instead of the sea. Our army is so small that even at this moment, as I learn from the chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, there is not a single United States soldier in the State of Alabama—none to light a match, if a hostile force enters the waters of Mobile bay.

At this very time, too, when war's dread horrors are laughed at by young members of this House—full of courage, doubtless, but with no experience—even now, when we are about to dare old England to cross swords with us, serious opposition is made to passing the bill of your Military Committee, providing for the raising of a single regiment of rifle-men!

Entirely unprepared, then, for such a terrible conflict as that between ourselves and Great Britain must inevitably be, will it be deemed treasonable, dishonorable, or cowardly, in one who here represents a portion of the people who are to be affected by it, to advise that "discretion, that better part of val' r," warns us to avoid it, if it can be done with honor?

But I am here met with the assertion that this notice is a *peace measure*. Would that I could believe so. But I cannot shut my eyes to the contrary, written as with a pen of iron, both on the notice itself, and on the facts attending it. As yet I have listened in vain to some half-a-dozen hour speeches in its favor, for a single argument showing it to be such. On the contrary, nearly every advocate of notice being given, runs into enthusiasm in contemplating the glories to be achieved in revenging the long unredressed injuries which England has committed upon the world! I will not repeat my argument showing that the convention was adopted as a *substitute* for war, and that therefore its termination involves war, or an abandonment of the claim of one or the other nation. I will now show how it is viewed by its supporters, peace advocates though they are asserted to be.

In the first place, the President, it seems to me, does not view it as a peace measure. I have had no conversation with him upon the point, and therefore speak only by that chart of his opinions officially communicated to Congress—his message. In that document he informs us that "no compromise which the United States ought to accept can be effected." "All attempts at compromise having failed," he recommends that "measures be taken for the maintenance of our just title to that country." Now, sir, if England will accept of no compromise that we can offer, and we are to maintain, by "measures" now to be taken, "our just title," what must those "measures" be? "*Measures*" of a character to *force* England to acknowledge "our just title," of course; and, as one of those measures, the President recommends that this notice be given; and very properly and wisely informs Congress that at the end of the year's notice, "we shall have reached a period when the national rights in Oregon must either be *abandoned* or *firmly maintained*." And *how*, is now a pertinent question, and against whom? The answer is easy—by armies, by fleets, by war against England, if she does not abandon a claim which she refused "all attempts" to compromise!

I say that it is written on the very face of the

aspect which this question presents, that giving this notice, and taking exclusive possession of Oregon, as the President recommends, is a war move. How are we to carry it into effect? How are we to dispossess our adversary from her thirty forts in Oregon? Certainly, those who know Great Britain will not dream that a mere reading of our law before those forts will cause their commanders to strike the cross of St. George, and quietly give us exclusive possession. Gentlemen have ransacked her history to some advantage in this debate, and have learned that for centuries she has been acquiring colonies, and urging herself up the scale of territorial accretion, till now, as has been beautifully and no less forcibly said, "the sun never sets upon her dominions."

Have they yet found a case, when, after so long and so perseveringly persisting in a claim, she at last, on the first show of opposition, quietly abandoned it? If so, I am yet to be informed of it! Then, to execute your law for asserting "our just title," force must be an ingredient of the means used.

The venerable gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. ADAMS] has so argued this question; though, at the same time, saying, in what I conceive to have been carefully selected phraseology, that he "did not believe at all in any danger of war, at this time." Whether he designed to cover, with his belief, the close of the twelve months given by the convention, he has not informed us. At all events, his arguments breathed a fierce, energetic war spirit. Truly and well did he depict the whole character of this move, when he illustrated it by reciting a celebrated event in history, exclaiming with very great emphasis—"This is the military way of doing business." His illustration was drawn from the memoirs of Frederick the Great. "I had some excellent old pretensions," wrote Frederick, "to an Austrian province, which some of my ancestors had owned one or two hundred years before, and I sent an ambassador to the court of Vienna, stating my claim, and presenting a full exposition of my right to the province. The same day that my ambassador was received in Vienna, I entered Silesia with my army." Without reflecting upon the bad faith which appears to me to have marked the proceeding of the Prussian monarch; and which seems therefore to be a strange example for so venerable a statesman to offer to our councils as an illustration of the course to be pursued, I accept it as indicative of the turn which affairs are expected to take after our ambassador gives notice. I only could sincerely desire that my own country was as well prepared to assert its title with a hundred thousand men as Frederick was—for as assuredly war follows our notice, as did the long and devastating war which the king's movement led to.

[Mr. KENNEDY, of Indiana, here remarked, "Half of that number would be sufficient."]

My friend on my left says that half of the number will answer. It is easy, sir, to talk of conquest—not so easy to effect them. My western friends here talk of war with England as a mere matter of amusement! England, they say, will fall in the contest; and we might readily suppose that they think that in a collision with us, she would "dissipate into thin air!" Do they know or reflect for a moment upon the responsibilities and dread consequences of a collision between twenty millions of people on either side, furiously seeking each other's

destruction? Or are they not rather like young Norval, who says that—

"On the Grampian hills, his father fed his flock—
A frugal swain—,"

who had kept him,

"An only son, at home."

But that—

"He had heard of battles, and longed
To follow to the field some warlike lord!"

This impulsive, valorous furor which is raging in this House, reminds me somewhat of the brave young Norval. Now my friend from Missouri [Mr. SIMMS,] has said "all of Oregon, or none; now or never." There is no man, sir, with a purer or braver heart than he. Single-handed and equally armed, I would risk him in a contest with any Englishman. But I would, as his friend, and the friend of the gentleman on my left, [Mr. KENNEDY,] pause before I would consent to expose the defenceless breasts of two such gallant spirits to such an armed and skilful adversary as they so heedlessly dare to the arena. Give either, however, a bayonet, or a western rifle, (their favorite weapon,) and I would confidently abide the result. So would I act with my country. Not calculating on the cowardice of our great adversary, I would hold the Union from an unequal conflict, which neither the private nor the public code of honor ever demands under such circumstances; and, like the brave Scottish chieftain, would say to her—"Bide your time."

My friend from Missouri [Mr. BOWLIN] as certainly looks upon this notice as a war measure, and seemed to revel in the idea of the conflict. He likened the situation of the two nations to the porcupine and snakes in the fable. During a storm a porcupine desired to take shelter in a den of snakes. They permitted him; and he commenced rolling and shooting his quills about to such an annoying degree, that the snakes begged him to leave. The armed reptile replied that those who desired to leave could. As for himself, he should remain. The cases are not analogous. England, it is true, is in our den; but she is quiet, and observes the good faith demanded by the treaty. Armed all over she is, however, like the porcupine; and we should learn this wisdom from the fable, not to provoke her to roll over us, and stick her quills into us, unless, perchance, like the snakes, we shall be forced to quit our own den! If, indeed, a porcupine is in our midst by invitation, and our scales are not proof against his missiles, it is wise in us not unnecessarily to provoke him.

In this connexion I desire to notice these animated attacks on England; these burning appeals to our patriotism; these outbreaks of enthusiastic love of country; and firm resolve to resist encroachment and insult. For my life, I cannot help but respond heartily to them all. My indignation is excited; detestation of English arrogance and insult is given birth to; an ardent love of my own country and its institutions is duly raised by these appeals. But I look around in vain for a point to which to apply all this pent-up ammunition. England is quiet, resting under a treaty framed between us twenty-eight years ago, and is on the eve of so modifying her corn-laws as to admit the contents of western "granaries to be emptied upon her shores." This is, then, it seems to me, a useless waste of patriotic enthusiasm; unless gentlemen fear that their's needs exercise to prevent its rusting.

I can well imagine, however, how such a course will operate upon the public mind—how the honest farmer, on reading such furious denunciation of what he is accustomed to think his national enemy, and of her rapacity, &c., can have his feelings wrought up under the idea that his country is the object of English rapacity and overbearance; and therefore he should demand that not an iota of our claims should be yielded to her. And I much fear that this is the surest way of accounting for this strong popular ferment in relation to this question.

Mr. Pakenham's letter, I humbly think, has been subjected, unnecessarily, to this severe and trying ordeal. On reperusing it, I cannot but think that his remarks, which have excited so much indignation, were designed merely to refer to the fact that he had been invited to open the negotiation in a spirit of compromise, and that he found our government receding from, instead of meeting him in that spirit—more having been offered to England at previous dates—offers, too, which he considered more equitable and fair.

This notice, then, if given, would be a war move. It is argued as such. Mr. Polk evidently deems it as such. In itself, it is such a move.

What, then, is the object? I am told, to obtain all of Oregon. I, too, go for all of Oregon. I go for it up to 54° 40'. I am desirous of attaining that end in a way most consistent with the interests and honor of the country, and most likely to be effectual. Will war—will the strong hand be that best mode? I think not, and am therefore opposed to giving the notice at this time.

In the event of war, it certainly would not be waged in Oregon. In the first place, it is too remote from our resources, both of material and men, for us to operate there successfully. It would take an army, fully equipped and carrying its own supplies, (for there are none in Oregon,) full four months to march from our frontiers into Oregon, scaling, Napoleon-like, in their progress, the American Alps. England—mistress of the sea by means of her numerous fleets, could much more readily transport troops and provisions to that point. With us, it would be equivalent to a foreign and aggressive war to carry it on in Oregon. For such a war, it is not treason to say we are weak. Our institutions do not fit us for it. England, then, I take it for granted, would soon have possession of the whole territory, and would soon fortify the passes against any invasion of it on our part hereafter.

The war, however, would be fiercely waged on the ocean and in Canada. Riding in large fleets, the cross of St. George might pass triumphant. In single and more equal combats, it would be as certainly lowered to the stars and stripes. Canada, too, would yield to our valor; and when both parties became tired of the contest, in which the vitality of neither would have been touched, Oregon would be found in the hands of England, and Canada would be in our possession. England cares but little for Canada. To her it is an expensive and comparatively useless colony. For Oregon she cares much; for whoever is planted there will, from its splendid ports, command the trade of the great Pacific. Under such circumstances, peace, in all human probability, would be made between the two countries, by which England would be left in possession of Oregon, and the United States in possession of Canada. The North and East, and portions of the South, and even West, would, after a long

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and exhausting struggle, consent to such terms, and thus would the *object of the war be lost*. The blood and treasure of the gallant West will have been poured out in vain, while the North and East will have reaped the greatest benefits for their sacrifices.

There might be one other result. Both parties, worn out by the struggle, might, as in the last war, stipulate to return all that either had conquered; and thus the country would be left where it was when it began the foolish contest of strength.

I said "the country would be left where it was." I erred, sir; far otherwise will be the result. We are now on the very portals of success in carrying out those noble principles of government, which our fathers bequeathed to us, and which, if once wholly in operation, will do more than anything else to advance the cause of liberty and happiness. We have just purged the old republican party of that system of *bastard republicanism*, which the war of 1812 bequeathed to the country, and have infused into it a new life and energy. The message of Mr. Polk is amongst the best evidences of it; and the noble and masterly report of Mr. Walker—making clear that which before was intricate and confused—taking high constitutional grounds on the great subject of revenue—illustrating it with new and irresistible arguments—a document which, side by side with his great Texas letter, will commend him to immortality, is another of those fruits. The bill of my friend from Virginia, [Mr. DROMGOOLE,] for establishing a constitutional treasury is another—all together forming a system of noble measures, well calculated to cause the heart of a true republican to throb with joy, if successfully carried through the ordeal of legislation.

We are on the point, too, of purchasing the magnificent territory of California, which, with Oregon, would give us a breadth of Pacific coast suited to the grandeur and commercial importance of our republic.

All this would be blighted by war. California would be lost to us; Oregon would be lost to us. A debt of five hundred millions would be imposed upon the country. The paper system, in its worst form, will necessarily have been imposed upon us. The pension list—that spring of life and immortality to patriotic valor—would be almost indefinitely increased. The government will have become *centralized*; its checks weakened; its administration federalized in all its tendencies. The fabric of State rights will have been swept away, and remain only as a glorious dream; and a strong military bias will have been given to the future career of our country, which, while it may be splendid in appearance, will bear within itself the certain elements of destruction.

Sir, this picture is not over-wrought. It is a melancholy truth, too well attested to be disputed, that republicanism, which grows in the genial smile of peace, shrinks from the clash of arms, and yields to the fiercer bearing and swelling energies of its antagonist principle, the one-man power—a principle which thrives upon the wants, and fattens upon the distresses of the country.

I say this in behalf of the whole country, and not merely for my own, my native land—the sunny South. In such a contest, come when it may, she, at least, has never faltered in her allegiance to the whole country; and it is now a pride and a pleasure to her sons, to remember that the actions of our gallant ancestry have been such, that no slur can be cast, even by the malignant fanatic, upon her escutcheon that history does not give the lie to.

Strong in all the elements of government, her peculiar institutions (she has been accustomed to think, and experience sustains her,) but strengthen her for a war.

Dreadful, however, as the results of war must necessarily be, they are to be endured—and only to be thought of to enable us the better to prepare for it—if it is necessary. *Is war, then, necessary at this time?* The gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. ADAMS] intimates that he has "heard of some question being made in England, whether they shall not give us notice of the termination of the joint occupancy." I apprehend that England will do no such thing. Her title is derived, she proclaims, from her convention with Spain; and under it she claims no exclusive right to an inch of Oregon. A notice, then, to us would, in some degree, impair the force with which she urges her rights under that convention. A notice that she designed to take *exclusive* possession of any part of Oregon, would be a notice that she abandoned her position under the Neotka Sound convention, which gives her no exclusive right, by her own interpretation, and that she rested her title upon other and, I must think, weaker grounds.

Does honor—"that blood-stained god at whose red altar sit war and homicide"—require us to plunge into a war with Great Britain? If so, I am yet to hear the first argument in support of it. The proposition recently rejected by England was rejected in 1824, and yet Mr. Monroe thought it no cause for war. A similar but more favorable proposition to England was rejected in 1818 and 1826; and yet neither Mr. Monroe nor Mr. Adams thought that our honor had been insulted to such a degree as to demand blood to efface it. General Jackson, Mr. Van Buren, General Harrison, and Mr. Tyler rested quietly after such rejection of our offers of compromise, and deemed not that it was necessary to give this notice to save the honor of the country.

Do the wants of our fellow-citizens require war? No. While we have millions of vacant and fertile land this side of the Rocky mountains unappropriated, there are in Oregon, we are told, but 7,000 souls inhabiting a vast country, as large as the original thirteen States—900 miles long by 700 broad! So far from the wants of the emigrants to Oregon requiring it, they are actually under obligations to the Hudson Bay Company to such an extent, for kind and hospitable acts, as to form what is even now called there an English party, who dread a war!

The only other objects to be attained by this agitation of war, have been given vent to by a representative of a miserable faction in Ohio, [Mr. GIDDINGS,] and by the gentleman from New York, [Mr. KING.] Of the former I will say nothing; and of the latter, only that this game of president-making, at the expense of such great interests, is worthy of being mentioned but to be denounced by every patriot. As to the great and pure man at whom he aimed, [Mr. CALHOUN,] he is far, far above his reach. That English arrow, even though shot from a New York bow, and even though the gentleman may have conceived it to be *Wright-ly* shot, falls harmlessly at the feet of that great statesman. It will not turn him from the path of duty, even though duty to his country may prove a sacrifice of high and honorable hopes, which a portion of the country may have entertained in relation to him. With him such sacrifices have been but too common, that he should

now be deterred in his career by any miserable insect that may have crawled there.

I have thus endeavored, Mr. Chairman, to demonstrate that, giving to England notice that we design to take exclusive possession of Oregon, will produce a war; that war will either terminate in the loss of Oregon, or in effecting nothing towards perfecting possession in us; that England will not give the notice, and that neither the honor nor the wants of the country require us to do.

I now propose to show, sir, that a system of peaceful measures will tend much more effectually to give us "all of Oregon," than warlike movements will.

I would say, then, pass your military bills. I am willing to vote to increase the number of our companies fifty or even one hundred per cent., and to raise mounted regiments sufficient to protect emigration to Oregon over our vast western plains.

I am ready to vote to build block-houses, not only on the route to the South Pass, but to build them in Oregon, as England has done.

I am ready to build such a station at the South Pass, as will enable the emigrants as they reach a point from which they can look upon the vast Atlantic slope on the one hand, and that of the Pacific on the other, to recruit and refit there.

I am ready to cover our people there with theegis of our laws, to the extent that England has protected her subjects.

I am ready to offer such other, and more tempting inducements to its settlement, as gentlemen may devise, in order that, in five years time, one hundred thousand men may be thrown in the vales and amidst the hills of this disputed land.

Amongst such a population, would readily be found at least *twenty thousand riflemen*, well acquainted with the country, hardy and enterprising, and each well trained to a skillful use of his splendid national weapon. With such a force there, I would entertain no fears of any attempt to dispossess us of the country. It would then be, by population and the means which I have marked out, a part and parcel of our Union. As such, it never could be conquered. It is differently situated now. But England—who, as I have repeatedly said, claims no exclusive jurisdiction—would not war with us for it, under such a state of facts, and must, therefore, by the laws of necessity and population, be quietly

rooted out. Perhaps her Hudson Bay Company would have to be remunerated. The Maine treaty furnishes a precedent by which that can readily be done. Let this be done, and we shall have realized the prophecy, and I sincerely believe, what was the wish at the time, of Lord Castlereagh, expressed twenty years ago to our minister—"Why are you Americans so anxious to push this negotiation? In a short time you would conquer Oregon in your bed-chambers." And most assuredly this will not be deemed treason in me, if I say that such a mode of perfecting possession of that disputed land is far preferable to any more bloody issue.

But, if dissatisfied with this course, Great Britain becomes alarmed, and appeals to the sword, then will the memories of every glorious battlefield, where we have proven our steel with her, animate our people to do their duty. In that event, the West, nerved by a recollection of the atrocities committed at the River Raisin—the East and Atlantic board, excited by a remembrance of this burning Capitol and their desolated towns—and the South, animated by the spirit which, on the plains of New Orleans, protected from British lust and rapine its "beauty and booty"—will, shoulder to shoulder, and with one common national impulse, rush to arms. Then, if you please, let every long-unredressed injury, inflicted by that haughty power upon the weak in every climate, nerve our arms, and make battle welcome; and, while the "fiery cross" goes speeding round our land, and our brothers gather for the conflict, let our motto be—"Do or die!"

In the burning language of the gallant Lochiel (some little altered to suit us,) and which an American may well quote—then

"Welcome be Cumberland's steed to the shock,
Let him dash his proud foam like a wave on the rock!
But wo to his kindred, and wo to his cause,
When 'Columbia' her claymore indignantly draws—
When her 'panoplied warriors' to victory crowd—
The brave-hearted and true—the dauntless and proud—
'Their swords are a million,' their bosoms are one—
They are true to the last of their blood and their breath,
And, like reapers, descend to the harvest of death."

That such a fearful tribunal for the settlement of our rights may never be forced upon us is my sincere prayer, sir. But if it must ever be so, then I most ardently hope, as I believe, that the country will be united and resolved to do its duty.

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